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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 CA-01 SCS-06 /093 W
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R 161919Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7025

[REDACTED] SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 6372

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS SHUM AR
SUBJECT [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] PRISON CONDITIONS

REF: BUENOS AIRES 5656

SUMMARY. [REDACTED]
ARGENTINE PRISON CONDITIONS FOR PEN PRISONERS AS
DEBILITATING AND MONOTONOUS BUT, WITH RARE EXCEPTION,
NOT BRUTAL OR DANGEROUS. MOST PRISONERS [REDACTED]
HAD BEEN TORTURED PRIOR TO THE PEN INCARCERATION.

[REDACTED] END SUMMARY.

1. [REDACTED]

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Griefeld Director
() Release (X) Rec'd () Deny
Exemptions(s):
Declassify: (X) In Part () In Full
(X) Classify as C () Extend as [REDACTED]
Date 5/9/01 Declassify on 5/9/11 Reason 35 x 6

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2. IN GENERAL, [REDACTED] PRISON CONDITIONS ARE FAR LESS DRASTIC THAN COULD BE EXPECTED. WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, PRISON GUARDS ARE NOT BRUTAL. PRISONERS OCCASIONALLY COMPLAIN [REDACTED] OF BEING SHOVED OR CUFFED, BUT PRISON BEATINGS ARE UNCOMMON. (EMBASSY CONTINUES TO RECEIVE REPORTS OF PRISON BEATINGS, INDICATING THE PRACTICE HAS NOT ENDED. [REDACTED])

[REDACTED] REPEATED HIS ESTIMATE REPORTED IN REFTEL THAT AS MUCH AS 90 PERCENT OF PEN PRISONER HAD BEEN TORTURED PRIOR TO PEN STATUS INCARCERATION.)

3. PRISON DIETS ARE BLAND AND MONOTONOUS BUT INCLUDE ADEQUATE CALORIC AND VITAMIN INTAKE. MOST PRISONERS CAN HAVE CASH ACCOUNTS TO BUY FOOD WHICH ARE HONESTLY ADMINISTERED BY PRISON STAFF. [REDACTED]

4. [REDACTED]

5. [REDACTED] DAM PRISONERS KEPT IN FEDERAL PRISONS (THOSE ACKNOWLEDGED AS BEING DETAINED UNDER MILITARY JURIS [REDACTED])

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DICTION) WHICH HE NUMBERS AT AROUND 100. HE SAID THESE PERSONS ARE GENERALLY KNOWN TO THEIR FAMILIES AND FAMILY VISITS AND/OR ASSISTANCE IS SOMETIMES PERMITTED. HE SAID HE BELIEVES THERE ARE OTHER PRISONERS, HOWEVER, WHO ARE KEPT COMPLETELY INCOMMUNICADO. (REFTEL ESTIMATES THE TOTAL NON-PEN EXTRA-LEGAL DETAINEE POPULATION MAY TOTAL UP TO 500.) [REDACTED]

6. [REDACTED] INTERIOR MINISTRY'S RECORDS AND FIGURES ON PEN PRISONERS ARE OUTDATED AND INEXACT. HE CITED A VISIT TO JUJUY PROVINCIAL PRISON

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WHERE HE HAD MININT PERMISSION TO SEE SOME 20 PRISONERS, ONLY TO FIND THAT ALL BUT SEVEN HAD BEEN EITHER RELEASED OR TRANSFERRED. A NUMBER OF PEN PRISONERS ARE RELEASED WITH NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] RUMORS OF RELEASES WHICH OFTEN PROVE TRUE. A MAJORITY OF PEN DETAINEES HOWEVER REMAIN IN JAIL AFTER REMOVAL FROM PEN STATUS BECAUSE JUDICIAL CHARGES ARE FILED.

7. MOST OF THE REMAINING PEN PRISONERS HAVE BEEN CONSOLIDATED INTO THE LARGEST FEDERAL PENAL INSTITUTIONS OF LA PLATA, VILLA DEVOTO, SIERRA CHICA, AND CORONDA. WITHIN THE LAST YEAR, PEN PRISONERS HAVE BEEN SEPARATED INTO THREE GROUPS. GROUP I IS THE MOST RIGOROUS. EXERCISE AND MOST ACTIVITY IS PROHIBITED. THE PURPOSE APPEARS TO BE TO WEAKEN THE DETAINEES BOTH PHYSICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY AND TO BREAK THEIR REVOLUTIONARY ZEAL AND PRECLUDE PRISONER REVOLTS OR ESCAPE ATTEMPTS. [REDACTED] GROUP II PROVIDES MORE SPACIOUS QUARTERS, EXERCISE, AND PRIVILEGES. A GROUP PSYCHOLOGIST SEES THE DETAINEES IN GROUP II, PRESUMABLY TO TRY TO ORIENT THEM AWAY FROM SUBVERSIVE ATTITUDES AND/OR DETERMINE THEIR ELIGIBILITY FOR EVENTUAL RELEASE OR CONTINUED DETENTION. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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8. GROUP III IS THE MOST OPEN AND LIBERAL SECTION WHERE, DEPENDING ON THE INSTITUTION, DETAINEES HAVE EXERCISE AND FRESH AIR, AND WHERE THEY CAN OCCUPY THEMSELVES WITH GYMNASTICS, HANDIWORK OR READING AND IN SOME CASES TELEVISION. THIS GROUP IS CLOSEST TO IMMINENT RELEASE. [REDACTED] DESCRIBED THEM AS THE "USEFUL IDIOT" VARIETY WHO HAD LITTLE OR NO CONNECTION TO SUBVERSION, WHO ARE NOT IDEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED AND WOULD JUST LIKE TO GO HOME.

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9. THE COMPOSITE OF THE GROUP VARIES. FOR EXAMPLE, [REDACTED] THE PEN POPULATION IN VILLA DEVOTO LAST MARCH WAS ABOUT 470 IN GROUP I, 150 IN GROUP II, AND 130 IN GROUP III. BY MAY 120 OF THOSE IN GROUP II MOVED UP TO GROUP III AND THE REST WENT TO GROUP I.

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7026

[REDACTED] SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 6372

10. [REDACTED]] A NUMBER OF PEN DETAINEES HAVE
NO FAMILY MEMBER TO ACT ON THEIR BEHALF TO APPLY FOR THE
RIGHT OF OPTION PROGRAM. HE SPECIFICALLY REFERRED TO
THE CASE OF GRACIELA SANTUCHO, DAUGHTER OF AMILCAR
SANTUCHO. AMILCAR SANTUCHO, BROTHER OF ERP LEADER MARIO SANTUCHO
WHO WAS KILLED IN MID 1976, IS PRESENTLY DETAINED
IN PARAGUAY AND THE SANTUCHO FAMILY HAS LEFT ARGENTINA. [REDACTED]

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11. [REDACTED]]

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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12. [REDACTED]

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13. [REDACTED]

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14. [REDACTED]

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